(c) whether Government propose to do so in respect of Delhi also;

(d) if so, details therof; and

(e) if not reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) MMTC has already been operating a duty free shop located in Sahar Airport departure lounge at Mumbai for selling gold jewellery under the brand name of "24 Karats: The Jewellery House". MMTC has also taken decision to open two more show rooms in Mumbai in domestic tariff area to exhibit and sell hallmarked and certified gold jewellery.

(c) to (e) Yes, Sir. MMTC has proposed to open a similar show room in Delhi to sell gold jewellery under their brand name and the work is under progress.

Less coal production in die country

954. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the production of coal in the country continues to be short of the demand estimate; and

(b) whether modern technology is being used to increase the coal production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir. Indigenous availability of coal is falling short of demand as assessed by the Planning Commission. Figures of demand and production in the country for the last two years are as under:—

(million tonnes

Year	Demand	Production
1994-95	268.50	253.73
1995-96	298.80	270.13

(b) To increase coal production steps have been taken in opening up of new mines and increasing efficiency and productivity in existing mines by modernisation, application of new technologies and ensuring timely availability of inputs and infrastructural facilities.

Provisions for obtaining coal mining leases

955. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) the provisions and stipulations for payment of exploration, boring, developmental or other charges to the Coal India Limited or its subsidiaries by private sector and public sector, individual partis/units for obtaining coal mining leases for captive or other uses;

(b) the exact basis of determination of these charges and up-to-date information thereof;

(c) whether these charges are also to be paid for the coal bearing areas/coal mines which are not within the lease holds of the Coal India Limited or its subsidiaries, or which are not nationalised; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) The Screening Committee functioning in the Ministry of Coal for screening proposals relating to captive mining by power generating companies and companies engaged in the manufacture of iron and steel had formulated certain guidelines in respect of identification/allotment of captive mining blocks one of which stipulates that the company to whom the block(s) are offered will bear full cost of exploration incurred by Coal India Ltd. etc. The Coal India Board has also issued similar directives in the matter. Therefore the allottee on payment of full cost of exploration of the block will get the geological report and then proesed for obtainininf mining lease and

(b) The job of formulation Of a basis for determination of exploration cost for captive mining blocks was entrusted to the Institute of Cost & Works Accountants of India.

The said body, after consideration of all factors, determined the basis of charging exploration cost The process of calculation of exploration cost consists of adding updated drilling cost (including cost of core analysis and geophysical tests) of all blocks plus 2.5% by way of 'Retrieval Cost (i.e. the cost of storing the test results and keeping them safe

for future use) and then apportioning this total cost among the blocks on the basis of UHV (Useful heat value) UHV of reserves. This was approved by the Coal India Board.

For all blocks which may he further identified. CIL Board has directed that exploration charges should be determined on the basis of meterage drilled in the particular block and weighted average drilling cost as furnished by CMPDIL.

Annual updation of exploration cost is to be done every year in September on the basis of weighted average drilling cost as furnished by CMPDIL for the previous year.

(c) and (d) Exploration charges arc to be paid to Coal India for any blocks for which expenditure has been incurred by CMPDIL, CIL and/or its subsidiaries including CMPDIL.

Quality of Automobile Components

956. DR. JAGANNATH MISHRA: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the Chinese automotive component sectors are producing better products in comparison with the Indian automobile sector;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps Government have taken/ propose to lake to improve the quality of automobile components so as to compete with the foreign countries?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (c) According to Indian Automotive Component Manufacturers Association, the Indian auto component industry is stronger than their Chinese counterpart and is producing better quality components, though a segment of the Chinese component industry is being developed by China to become world class. Out of the 350 key players of the Indian Auto Component Industry, 93 have already received the ISO-9000 certification which amply demonstrates that the Indian auto component industry is highly conscious of quality. Government is permitting liberal import of technology by auto component manufacturers to further improve quality of their products.

Pakistan's demand for supply of wheat

957. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJI-RAO SHINDE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Pakistan Government have made a fervent demand for supply of some two lakh tonnes to wheat from India:

(b) if so, whether Pakistan is not in a position to pay for the wheat in cash; and

(c) the Government's response to this demand'.'

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) High Commission for Pakistan in. India had indicated Pakistan's interest in importing wheat and sugar from India and made certain enquiries regarding specifications and other details. However. no formal request from Pakistan Government has been received in this regard.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Proposal to amend the Patents Act

958. SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH:
SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA:

Will the Minsiter of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal under their consideration to amend the Patents Act;

(b) if so, the details of the proposal; and

(c) the time by when a decision in this regard would be taken?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (c) As a signatory to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Agreement, India has certain obligations. The WTO Agreement, inter-alia, contains an agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. (TRIPs) in respect of provisions concerning Intellectual Property Rights. Apart from the obligations which arose from January 1,1995, India has time till January 1,2000 to implement its obligations under the TRIPs Agreement and till January 1,2005 to introduce product patents in the areas of technology not protected so far.

The Government is now in the process of holding consultations on the subject.